

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 12717

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PGOV PINT CB

SUBJECT: SIHANOUK FORMER PRESS SECRETARY COMMENTS ON CAMBODIAN
GOVERNMENT

SUMMARY: IN A BRIEF INTERVIEW ON OCTOBER 23, MR. NOUTH
CHHOEURM, FORMER PRESS SECRETARY OF THE SIHANOUK EN-
TOURAGE IN PEKING, PROVIDED HIS COMMENTS ON THE PRESENT
GOVERNMENT IN PHNOM PENH TO A CONGEN OFFICER. HE
LAMENTED THAT THE NATIONALIST GROUP REPRESENTED BY
SIHANOUK AND KHIEN SAMPAN HAD FALLEN UNDER THE SWAY
OF IENG SARY AND HIS "FASCIST EXTRIMIST, VIENTNAMESE-
LACKEY" FOLLOWERS. PHONOM PEHN WAS NOW IN THE HANDS
OF A MILITARY DICTATORSHIP WITH NO FREEDOM FOR THE
PEOPLE. END SUMMARY.

1. MR. NOUTH SPOKE OPENLY OF HIS CONTINUED SUPPORT
OF PRIENCE SIHANOUK AND HIS DISLIKE FOR THE "FASCIST".
IN CONTROL IN PHON PENH. HE STATED THAT HE WAS THE
LAST OF SIHANOUK'S ENTOURAGE IN PKEING TO LEAVE
CHINA AND THAT HE PLANNED TO CONTINUE MON
TO PARIS. HE SAID THAT HIS WIFE HAD DIED IN
CAMBODIA SEVERAL YEARS AGAO BUT HE STILL HAD 12
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CHILDREN THERE WHOM HE DESPAIRED OF EVER SEEING

AGAIN. "EVEN IF THERE WERE COMMUNICATIONS, HOW COULD I FIND THEM?" HE ASKED RHETORICALLY. "THE NEW GOVERNMENT HAS CHANGED EVERYONE'S NAME."

2. NOUTH DESCRIBED HIMSELF AS A MARXIST CAMBODIAN NATIONALIST IN THE GOVERNMENT ASIDE FROM SIHANOUK WERE KIEU SAMPHAN AND HIS SUPPORTERS, HOU YUON AND HU NIM. HE ALSO CLASSIFIED PRINCE PHURISSARA (MINISTER OF JUSTICE) AND ROS CHET THOR(DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER) AS NATIONALISTS. HE CHARACTERIZED DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER IEDNG SARY AS A FASCIST EXTREMIST AND LACKEY OF THE VIETNAMESE WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR CAMBODIA'S CURRENT TRAGIC CONDITION. HE PLACE IN THE CAMP OF THE IENG SARY "EXTREMIST" THE FOLLOWING GOVERNMENT PERSONALITIES: DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER SON SEN, THIOUNN THOEUNN (MINISTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH) AND HIS BROTHERS, UN REPRESENTATIVE THIOUNN PRASITH AND THIOUNN MUNN, IENG SARY'S WIFE. KIEU THIRITH (MINISTER OF EDUCATION) TOCH PHOEUN (MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS), CHOU CHET (MINISTER OF RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS-A "REAL LACKEY OF THE VIETNAMESE".) KOY THUON (MINISTER OF ECONOMY) MEN SAN (MINISTER OF ARMAMENT, SOK THOUK (DEPUTY OF SECURITY). KONG SOPHAL (DEPUTY MINISTER OF INFORMATION), VAN PINY (DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS), POLITBUREAU SECRETARY KEAT CHHON, AMBASSADOR TO DRV SIEN AN, AND FUNK PARTY MEMBERS DUONG SAM OL, HAK SENG LAYNY (SINGLED OUT AS ONE OF THE VERY WORST EXTREMISTS), AND HENG PICK.

3. NOUTH REPORTED THE FOLLOWING CAMBODIAN AMBASSADORS AS BEING FAVORABLE TO THE NATIONALIST GROUP, CHAU SENG (PARIS), HUOT SAMBATH (BELGRADE) CHEA SAN (BUCHAREST), CHAU YOURAN (DAKAR) AND ANG KIM KHOAN (PYONGYANG). HE INDICATED THAT FORMER GENERAL NGO HOU HAD RETIRED FROM POLITICAL LIFE.

4. NOUTH NOTED THAT DURING HIS STAY IN HONG KONG HE HAD GIVEN INTERVIEWS TO THE FAR EASTERN ECONOMIC REVIEW THE OBSERVER, NEW YORK TIMES, NEWSWEEK, TIME CONFIDENTIAL

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AND CBS.

5. COMMENT: WE REGARD THE INFORMATION NOUTH HAS PROVIDED WITH SOME SKEPTICISM. HE DID NOT ACCOMPANY SIHANOUK TO PHNOM PENH AND HAS NOT BEEN IN CAMBODIA FOR FIVE YEARS. NEVERTHELESS, HE DID HAVE ACCESS TO SIHANOUK AND IS VERY POSSIBLY MAKING HIS INFORMATION AVAILABLE WITH SIHANOUK'S AGREEMENT, PERHAPS

EVEN ENCOURAGEMENT. THE FACTIONAL LINE-UP PRESENTED
MUST, TO SOME EXTENT REFLECT SIHANOUK'S VIEW OF
THINGS. WE DOUBT THAT VIETNAMESE INFLUENCE
IS AS STRONG AS NOUTH INDICATED CONSIDERING THE
OBVIOUS STAIN STILL EXISTING BETWEEN
CAMBODIA AND VIET NAM. IT SEEMS MORE LIKELY THAT WHAT
IS BEING DESCRIBED IS TWO FACTIONS CONSISTING OF A
RELATIVELY MODERATE COMMUNIST NATIONALIST GROUP
LEAD BY KHIEU SAMPHAN BEING RESSURED BY A MORE
HARDLINE GROUP(PERHAPS TO SOME EXTENT FOLLOWING
THE NORTH VIETNAMESE MODEL WITH OUT BEING PRO-
VIETNAMESE) LEAD BY IENG SARY.
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